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ABSTRACT

Do social studies textbooks used in U.S. schools provide an unbiased view of other cultures? This research study analyzes five social studies textbook series and 26 children's literature books used as supplementary materials for teaching about Oriental cultures. The instrument used was the Evaluation Coefficient Analysis (ECA) with the focus on value judgements used to describe Oriental cultures in the materials examined in the study. The criteria used were that the textbooks should be for the sixth grade level and that the children's literature should be used as supplementary materials. The results showed that of 94 textbook terms which were rated, 60 percent were viewed as favorable, 36 percent unfavorable, and 4 percent neutral. In the children's literature, 70 percent of the 17 terms evaluated were favorable and 30 percent were unfavorable, with 1 percent neutral. The findings suggested that selected social studies textbooks do not provide a negative stereotypical representation of Oriental cultures as indicated by a favorable rating on the ECA. Charts, tables, and a 26-item bibliography are appended. (NL)

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DETERMINING ACCURACY OF CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF ORIENTAL CULTURES

Presented at the Annual Conference
of the
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November 13, 1987

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Determining Accuracy of Cultural Perceptions of Oriental Cultures

Cross cultural awareness and accuracy of cultural perceptions of public school students have concerned educators in the United States since the 1920's (Rivera, 1984). However, schools often fail to go beyond simply avoiding stereotypical presentations of minority groups and attempt to promote harmonious inter-group attitudes (Pratt, 1972). Since instructional materials are important sources of cultural information, the first step in such an endeavor would be a precise description of the attitudes and values contained in these materials. The primary purpose of this paper is to discuss a technique, Evaluation Coefficient Analysis (ECA) which allows educators to determine accuracy of representation. The second goal of this paper is to present a study describing the use of ECA to indicate representation in classroom instructional materials.

BACKGROUND

Culture, according to Highwater, is the reason for the distance between nations (Highwater, 1978). In order to narrow the cultural gap between nations more accurate cultural perceptions must be developed so that understanding can be accomplished. Such understanding is especially important in nations such as the United States and other countries which are composed of states or nation states, where students may fail to think of themselves as a part of a global sphere.

The focus of numerous previous studies has been ethnic material, textbooks, or children's literature. Such studies have emphasized the

accuracy of the material regarding certain cultural groups without offering a comparison between the material and the textbook (Stoddard, 1984; Chapman, 1981; Gast, 1967). Instead of providing a comprehensive review of one teaching tool, the current study attempted to provide a comparison of treatments of a single cultural group in social studies texts and suggested children's literature. An attempt was also made to discover if there is a need for supplemental materials in elementary social studies for the purpose of developing accurate cultural perceptions or if using only the textbook is sufficient. This is not to imply that the textbook is not an invaluable tool for transmitting knowledge, but that educators might find it beneficial to follow suggestions for additional readings.

In the United States, the single material repeatedly used to transmit knowledge is the textbook (Anyon, 1978; Brandt, 1980). Textbooks have many positive attributes and have made great strides in the area of cultural perspectives. Although this is true, some studies have shown that social studies texts often present biased views of ethnic or racial groups (Michigan State Department of Education, 1972; Chapman, 1981). Another problem encountered in the use of the social studies texts as the single tool for transmitting knowledge is the fact that most textbooks tend to be informational in content and fail to emphasize the human dimension of historical events and cultures (Black, 1967; Chambers, 1971; Garcia and Logan, 1983).

Stoddard proposed that children's literature is one method for introducing "global concepts and multicultural understanding" (Stoddard, 1984). Of the research studies which focus on the effect of children's literature on cultural attitudes of children, several have found a

positive effect (Fisher, 1965; Schwartz, 1973; Frankel, 1972). Through using books which contain accurate representation of specific culture and which are written at a level for children, accurate cultural perceptions of similarities as well as differences can be noted. Based on such studies, Chambers maintains that children's literature, when used along with the social studies texts, can help children to visualize and become a part of a culture "in a vicarious way" (Chambers, 1971).

Finally, and importantly, the justification for this study is developed in part from the descriptions of criteria offered by the textbook publishers concerning the supplemental children's literature. The criteria, in some cases, support the findings of Skeel, Gast, Kane, and others; that is, that it is important that the children's literature used in social studies classrooms be accurate and at a level appropriate for the child (Skeel, 1979). Skeel reported that selection should be made with care so both similarities and differences between various cultures are shown (Skeel, 1979). Recognizing and evaluating the usefulness of materials has been the focus of a number of studies. The main areas of exploration of these studies included the area of stereotypical characterization of ethnic groups, especially of those in the United States (Gast, 1967; Kane, 1970). The current study explores the cultural perceptions reflected in the selected social studies texts and suggested supplemental children's literature about a group of people outside the United States which has played a major role in the development of the United States.

METHODS AND DATA SOURCE

Many educators and researchers have gathered subjective data in the area of cultural perceptions. In turn they have indicated their belief that accurate cultural perceptions can be enhanced through the use of children's literature as a supplemental material. However, there have been few objective assessments made concerning the cultural information offered in the children's literature suggested by the social studies text publishers and the texts themselves. Furthermore, neither the quality of the cultural information contained in the material nor the relationship between the two types of materials has been previously investigated.

The procedures and materials used in this study were designed to gain information concerning the amount of cultural information contained in the selected social studies texts as well as the children's literature suggested by the text publishers. Major research questions in the study were: Do the selected social studies textbooks provide an unbiased representation of Oriental cultures? Does the children's literature suggested for use by publishers of social studies textbooks provide a favorable representation of Oriental cultures? Materials analyzed were five social studies textbook series and twenty-six children's literature books listed as supplemental reading.

There were two basic criteria used in selection of the social studies textbooks analyzed in the study. The first criterion was that the study would be limited to texts that were at the sixth grade level as this was the level proposed by the National Council for the Social Studies for inclusion of study of cultures of the Eastern Hemisphere (Social Education, 1984).

The second criterion for textbook selection was the inclusion of children's literature as supplemental material. References for the use of children's literature were included in either the content of the text or in separate bibliographical listings, usually in the teacher's edition.

The criteria for the children's literature evaluated in the study was limited. For inclusion in the study, the literature had to be listed as supplemental readings in bibliographies of the selected textbooks or in the content of the text.

The instrument used for analysis of the textbooks and children's literature in the study was ECA. The Evaluation Coefficient Analysis (ECA) is a relatively simple instrument which focuses on the value judgements expressed in written materials. It provides a quantitative measure of the content contained in written materials, and is especially useful in relation to evaluation concerning cultural or minority groups (Pratt, 1972).

The procedure for using ECA includes: (1) Defining materials to be analyzed in the study. (2) Defining subjects of interest. (3) Preparing ECA Score Sheets (Appendix A) and copies of the ECA Word List (Appendix B) for each evaluator. (4) Scanning materials for references to the subjects of interest. (5) Listing evaluative terms. (6) Comparing terms to the ECA Word List. (7) Calculating the Coefficient of Evaluation (Pratt, 1972).

Each social studies textbook was scanned for terms or references made concerning Oriental cultures. The books were scanned, page by page, in their entirety as references to the specific groups are not always listed in the table of contents. Terms and page numbers were listed on the ECA Score Sheet for further reading and evaluation.

After each book was scanned, the noted pages and terms were read carefully in order to evaluate the terms relating to Oriental cultures as being either favorable or unfavorable. The final step in the analysis of the textbooks was to assign a rating and calculate the coefficient for each book.

The children's literature analyzed as a part of the study followed similar steps as the textbook analysis. Each book was read in its entirety so that the researcher could become familiar with the intent of the author and the design or format of the book.

Following the first reading, each book was scanned for terms which were specifically related to Oriental cultures. The terms and page numbers were listed on the ECA Score Sheet for further reading and evaluation.

The next step in the analysis of the children's literature was the second reading of each book with special attention being given to noted terms for rating purposes. After this step, each terms was rated as being favorable or unfavorable in its usage related to Oriental cultures. The final step in analysis of the children's literature was to calculate the Evaluation Coefficient for each book.

This was accomplished by using the formula developed by Pratt (1972). The formula used was:

$$\frac{\sum + \times 100}{\sum + + \sum -} = \text{ECA}$$

RESULTS

Results of the study are presented in two general sections. Ratings provided by ECA are presented in the first section for cultural information in the selected social studies texts. The ratings of children's literature for cultural information is presented in section two. Also in the second section, the percentage of terms used in the social studies texts and children's literature is presented.

In the study selected elementary social studies textbooks were evaluated for information which focused on Oriental cultures. To identify the amount of information concerning Oriental cultures in the textbooks, the procedures outlined in ECA were carefully followed.

Of the five textbooks analyzed, three ratings were above the neutral range of 50-59. Two books rated within the neutral range of 50-59. Terms used to describe the culture were not limited, in the sense of being stereotypical. Examples of the favorable, unfavorable and neutral evaluative terms included pleasant (+), skilled (+), fear (-), and foreign (0).

-- INSERT TABLE ONE ABOUT HERE --

The scores, or ratings of the selected social studies textbooks as determined by ECA, indicate a neutral to favorable representation of Oriental cultures. Furthermore, terms used in evaluations of Oriental culture did not reflect stereotypical bias.

The children's literature suggested by the selected social studies textbook publishers was analyzed to determine, by using ECA, if a favorable representation of Oriental cultures is given. Because of the narrative

form of children's literature, synonyms of terms which are listed on the ECA Word List (Appendix B) were used in addition to the words on the list for a more accurate rating. (See Appendix C for bibliographical information on the children's literature.)

Those books suggested by social studies textbook publishers included thirteen with ratings above the neutral range of 50-59. Nine books received ratings within the neutral range, and four books received ratings below the neutral range. Cumulatively, of the twenty-six children's literature books suggested, the median rating was 60, indicating a favorable treatment of Oriental cultures.

-- INSERT TABLE TWO ABOUT HERE --

In order to provide further clarification of the representation of Oriental cultures in the selected sixth grade social studies texts and the suggested children's literature, percentage of responses was compared by category (favorable, unfavorable, neutral). The terms used to describe Oriental cultures in both selected social studies texts and suggested children's literature were either listed on the ECA Word List or were synonyms of the terms on the list (Appendix B).

-- INSERT TABLE THREE ABOUT HERE --

Of the terms used in selected sixth grade social studies textbooks to describe Oriental cultures, eighteen terms had two or more occurrences within the analysis. Of those eighteen terms, thirteen were rated favorable in relation to Oriental cultures. The percentage and rating of the terms

indicated, in general, a favorable attitude towards Oriental cultures is presented in the social studies textbooks analyzed.

-- INSERT TABLE FOUR ABOUT HERE --

Seventeen terms were used five or more times in the analysis of the twenty-six children's literature selections. Of the seventeen terms, eleven were rated favorable in relation to Oriental cultures with five being rated as unfavorable. One term was rated as a neutral or ambivalent term. The percentage and ratings of these terms, in general, indicate a somewhat neutral reflection of Oriental cultures in the children's literature suggested for supplemental use by the social studies text publishers.

FINDINGS

Question 1. Do the selected social studies textbooks provide an unbiased representation of Oriental cultures?

Of the ninety-four evaluative terms listed on the ECA Word List indicating a favorable, unfavorable, or ambivalent attitude in texts, fifty-five terms (approximately 60 percent) were rated favorable with thirty-four (approximately 36 percent) being rated unfavorable. Five terms (approximately 4 percent) were rated as being neutral. The selected sixth grade social studies textbooks do not provide a negative stereotypical representation of Oriental cultures, but tend to offer a favorable representation of Oriental cultures as indicated by the percentage of favorable ratings determined by ECA.

Question 2. Does the children's literature suggested for use by publishers of social studies textbooks provide a favorable representation of Oriental cultures?

The children's literature suggested for use by the social studies textbook publishers generally provide a favorable representation of Oriental cultures as determined by ECA. Of the seventeen terms used most frequently in the children's literature analyzed relating to Oriental cultures, eleven terms (approximately 70 percent) were rated favorably, with five terms (approximately 30 percent) being rated unfavorably and one term (less than 10 percent) being rated as a neutral term.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the current study indicate that the social studies textbooks under study were, generally, favorable in representation of Oriental cultures. Terms rated in the study were, for the most part, favorable and generic in the sense they could be used to describe any given culture.

The children's literature suggested for use by the social studies textbook publishers provide, overall, a favorable representation of Oriental cultures. The ratings of the terms as defined by ECA, as well as the frequency of terms used, indicated accuracy was a focus of the literature.

The current study has value concerning the usefulness of materials used for instruction in elementary social studies classrooms. The materials

which were analyzed, social studies textbooks and suggested children's literature, were generally favorable in their treatment of Oriental cultures. This information leads to the conclusion that the materials under study could be recommended for use as being generally favorable in the treatment of Oriental cultures. The study further indicates that similar studies of other materials could prove beneficial in the accumulation of data needed in order to make broader conclusions.

Based on the findings of the current study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Publishers of social studies textbooks should continue their inclusion of supplemental bibliographies for student and teacher use, but make every effort to assure that cultural representations are nonstereotyped.
2. More research is needed to discover whether or not the majority of supplemental materials are correlated with the textbooks used in social studies classrooms.
3. More research is needed to discover how cultural information affects the attitudes of children, concentrating on long term effects.
4. More research is needed regarding the use by teachers of the supplemental materials.

Table 1

Rating of Terms Describing Oriental Cultures
in Selected Social Studies Texts

Text	Favorable $\sum+$ Terms	Unfavorable $\sum-$ Terms	Neutral $\sum 0$ Terms	ECA
The World	10	4	1	72
The Earth	6	6	1	50
The World and Its People	12	8	2	60
Our World	9	2	0	82
Our World: Lands and Cultures	18	14	1	56

Table 2

Rating of Terms Describing Oriental Cultures
in Supplemental Children's Literature

Book	Favorable $\Sigma+$ Terms	Unfavorable $\Sigma-$ Terms	Neutral $\Sigma 0$ Terms	ECA
Book A	7	3	1	70
Book B	6	4	1	60
Book C	10	7	0	59
Book D	7	4	0	64
Book E	8	4	0	67
Book F	5	7	0	42
Book G	7	6	3	54
Book H	8	2	0	80
Book I	6	5	0	55
Book J	5	6	0	46
Book K	3	7	0	30
Book L	7	5	1	58
Book M	7	3	3	70
Book N	10	3	0	77
Book O	9	2	2	82
Book P	4	5	1	44
Book Q	5	5	1	50
Book R	7	3	2	70
Book S	7	6	3	53
Book T	13	10	2	57
Book U	9	1	1	90
Book V	7	5	0	58
Book W	7	3	2	70
Book X	13	1	0	93
Book Y	10	9	2	53
Book Z	6	3	0	66

Table 3

Terms Most Frequently Used In Selected Social Studies Texts To Describe Oriental Cultures (2 or more occurrences)*

Term	Number of Times Used		
	2	3	4
careful	+		
duty	-		
educated	+		
friendly	+		
fighter	-		
free		+	
fear		-	
good	+		
happy	+		
honorable		+	
important	+		
independent	+		
loyal	+		
poor/poverty	-		
problem	-		
respect		+	
superior	+		
skilled			+

* + indicates terms used favorably.
- indicates terms used unfavorably.

Table 4

Terms Most Frequently Used In Selected Children's Literature To Describe Oriental Cultures (5 or more occurrences)*

	Number of Times Used							
Term	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
beautiful								+
crowded			-					
fear	-							
fight					-			
free			+					
friend				+				
good	+							
happy			+					
honor					+			
independent			+					
important						+		
loyal		+						
poor/poverty							-	
pride			+					
primitive		-						
simple			0					
skilled								+

* + indicates terms used favorably.
- indicates terms used unfavorably.
0 indicates terms used neutrally.

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Florez, V. and Hadaway,N. (1986). Bridging linguistic and cultural differences through reading: Multiethnic literature in the classroom. Resources in Education. (ERIC Document Reproducation Service No. ED 278 959)

Frankel, H. L. (1972). The effect of reading the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn on the racial attitudes of selected ninth grade boys. Dissertation Abstracts International, 33, 1318A-1319A. (University Microfilm No. 72-27 15)

Garcia, J. and Logan, J. (1983). Teaching social studies using basal readers. Social Education, 47, 533-35.

Gast, David K. (1967). Minority Americans in children's literature. Elementary Education, 44, 12-23.

Highwater, J. (1978). Many Smokes, Many Moons: A Chronology of American History Through Indian Art. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott.

Kane, M. B. (1970). Minorities in Textbooks. New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'rith.

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APPENDIX A

Source_____ Subject_____ Score_____

	Page	Term	Direction		Page	Term	Direction
1.				26.			
2.				27.			
3.				28.			
4.				29.			
5.				30.			
6.				31.			
7.				32.			
8.				33.			
9.				34.			
10.				35.			
11.				36.			
12.				37.			
13.				38.			
14.				39.			
15.				40.			
16.				41.			
17.				42.			
18.				43.			
19.				44.			
20.				45.			
21.				46.			
22.				47.			
23.				48.			
24.				49.			
25.				50.			

APPENDIX B

ECA Word List*

Some examples

Term	Rating of Term	Term	Rating of Term
calm	+	dishonest	-
capable	+	disloyal	-
careful	+	distinguished	+
charitable	+	drunk	-
charming	+		
cheap	-	eager	+
chivalrous	+	elegant	+
civilized	+	eloquent	+
clean	+	enduring	+
clever	+	energetic	+
cold	-	enthusiastic	+
colorful	+	experienced	+
common	0	expert	+
complex	0	extremist	-
conscientious	+		
conspirator	-	failure	-
corrupt	-	fair	+
courageous	+	faithful	+
coward	-	false	-
crafty	0	famous	+
criminal	-	fat	-
cruel	-	fearful	-
cultured	+	fearless	+
		feeble	-
daring	+	ferocious	-
dauntless	+	fierce	-
dear	+	firey	0
dedicated	+	fine	+
delicate	+	foolish	-
delightful	+	foreign	0
dependent	0	free	+
deserter	-	friendly	+
determined	+	furious	-
devoted	+		
devout	+	genius	+
dictator	-	gentle	+
dirty	-	gentleman	+
disgruntled	-	gifted	+

*Terms taken from the Evaluation Coefficient System developed by David Pratt (1972).

APPENDIX C

Book A — Sorell, Orville. In the People's Republic: An American's First Hand View. Random House, 1978.

Book B — Gibbon, David. Hong Kong, Bali, and Singapore. Crescent, 1978.

Book C — Pool, Frederick G. Southeast Asia. New York: Franklin Watts Publishers.

Book D — Hoare, Sophie. Japan: The Land and Its People. Macdonald Educational.

Book E — Hammond, Jonathon. China: The Land and Its People. Macdonald Educational, 1976.

Book F — Paterson, Katherine. Sign of the Chrysanthemum. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1973.

Book G — Buck, Pearl. The Big Wave. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1948.

Book H — Van DeWettering, Janwillem. Little Own: An Eightfold Buddhist Admonition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1978.

Book I — Kurland, Gerald. Mao Tse-Tung: Founder of Communist China. New York: Sambar Press, 1972.

Book J — Caldwell, John C. Let's Visit Malaysia. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1966.

Book K — Townsend, John R. The Islanders. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1981.

Book L — Knox, Robert. Ancient China. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc.

Book M — Weatherbee, Donald E. Ancient Indonesia. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc.

Book N — Walker, Richard. Ancient Japan. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc.

Book O — Kelen, Betty. Confucius in Life and Legend. New York: American Elsevier Publishers, Inc.

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Book P — Lancaster, Peter. Early China and the West. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing Co.

Book Q — Edmonds, I. G. Hirduism. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc.

Book R — Roberts, John. Industrialization of Japan. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc.

Book S — Maxwell-Lefroy, C. Land and People of Burma. New York: Macmillan, Inc.

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Book U — Boardman, Gwenn. Living in Singapore. New York: American Elsevier Publishers, Inc.

Book V — Serage, Nance. The Prince Who Gave Up a Throne: A Story of Buddha. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., Publishers.

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Book Z — Poole, Frederick K. Malaysia and Singapore. New York: Franklin Watts, Inc.

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